

Governor's Hmong Resettlement Task Force

Education Sub-Committee

TO: Committee Members

FROM: Nell Anderson, Education Sub-Committee Chair - Wausau
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Eau Claire (member of sub-committee only)

DATE: August 20, 2004

RE: Prioritized Needs, Best Practices, and Possible Solutions for Education

Education sub-committee responded by email to the three issues identified by the task force sub-committee chairs: prioritize needs, identify best practices, and offer recommendations for solutions. Around these issues, further questions arose. The sub-committee is in the process of searching out complete answers.

Sub-committee members were asked to respond with their expertise and to also seek out responses from members of their community with knowledge on the topics.

Clarify Needs

Identify immediate needs in education.

Questions were:

Where do you place a 17 year old? Public school? Technical College?

The general response was to place up to 17 year olds in public school, after that age, students should seek education through technical colleges.

Eau Claire has a unique plan:

Eau Claire is expecting 20 high school students and if they aren't ready for high school, they will be able to take ESL classes at our technical college. CVTC plans to offer ESL classes at the Eau Claire, Dunn, and Chippewa county campuses. After students become proficient they can attend high school, pursue a GED, or enroll in a CVTC degree program.

How soon should the children and adults start English classes?

The general response was as soon as they are able. Some communities have already established classes for the students (Stevens Point, Appleton), some have classes for the adults (Madison), and others are doing Family Literacy where the whole family comes for instruction at a central location and break into smaller groups (Wausau).

Identify short-term needs (up to one year).

Funding?

Most school districts have concerns about funding. In talking to Tony Evers of the DPI, they will allow an exemption to the June 30, 2004 date for Transfer of Service requests for these new arrivals and extend that date until October 31, 2004. Districts will be allowed to claim all anticipated students for **Transfer of Service** funds. This means that the district would be allowed to raise the revenue limit for any additional direct costs including any new teachers, any new paraprofessionals and any new busing. Districts must submit the students' names, date of birth, and addresses (anchor family addresses if residing in said school district) of actual and anticipated students by October 31, 2004.

Other districts are looking into moving the third Friday in September count date for these students, but we believe that would require legislative action.

Technical Colleges are seeking funds for classes. Many have options in place. Technical Colleges are working with Job Centers to enroll adult students tying education in with their W-2 funds.

What are sources for tutors?

The EIP students could help with tutoring. The office may be able to identify college students, and the EIP office does offer after school tutoring to its members. In addition, The AmeriCorps program might be a resource for volunteers or help.

The WEOP program in Eau Claire in partnership with UW/Eau Claire's UP Ward Bound Program plan to train some of their Hmong high school students to mentor

the middle and high school refugees. All new refugees who enroll in the EIP program will also be offered after school tutoring services.

Local Literacy Councils are sources of one-on-one tutors as are community centers.

Identify long-term needs.

IE: Funding Long-term? College?

Issues here are finding colleges the new refugees will be accepted with the admission criteria becoming stricter and stricter. The ACT test is a concern plus the new refugees' writing skills. Therefore, prep programs will need to be implemented to help the new refugees get into college. WEOP offices would be a resource for this. WEOP offices would also need to work with identifying colleges such as UWSP and St. Norbert who have English Language Institutes to assist our new refugees transition to college. Funding, WEOP can help families with the process to apply for financial aid. Students would qualify for financial aid (loans, work study, and grants) just as any other refugee.

Best Practices

Identify successful program models that can be replicated elsewhere

Newcomer Programs, Workplace Learning Sites.

The Eau Claire School District is setting up welcome centers at some of the schools and help the families feel welcome. The centers will assess students individually and teach them about American culture.

Menomonie school district is setting up a program for 28 refugee students. It will be located in the high school and will teach English until students are ready to integration. The program will also assess learning levels, check health and screen for disabilities. Menomonie has hired 1 1/2 teachers and two interpreters for the program.

Wausau will have Newcomer Centers for 4-year-olds, and at the elementary level, middle school, and high school. Hmong teachers have been hired to instruct these newcomers. Students are integrated into the regular classroom for art, music, phy ed and other classes when ready. Family learning activities are planned through these centers.

What are some resource opportunities for education?

What are some of the gaps in refugee education?

ESL programs tend to focus on the language skill and leave the mathematics. They should learn both because they are necessary for jobs. ESL programs work well for beginners but tend to leave out those whose

English is good. Often they would refer to GED, but they cannot learn well in GED because they do not have the necessary skills; they need direct teaching and not self-study. GED is for those who have not graduated from high school but were in high school before. "I know many Hmong people are already here for many years yet cannot advance their education or career because they have no GED or high school diploma."

Funding is a concern at all levels.

What are some recommended solutions?

Bilingual teacher will be a big help for beginners to speed up their learning process.

I do not know whether other cities have adult high school program like Milwaukee. This program works well for this group of people. Adult high school program in MATC offers full complete courses in day and evening for high school diploma. They can get all the necessary credits for high school diploma and can go further into technical or college. If we can extend this program to other cities, it will help many Hmong people to further their education and career.

Adult English as a Second Language (ESL)

Submitted by: Mary Ann Jackson, WTCS

1. Identify immediate needs.
 - There is a need to emphasize teaching parents the skills that will to help them be the main supporter for their children's education. We need to keep the parents influence dominant in the families. In order to do that they have to learn what it means to support their children's learning e.g. help with homework, go to parent-teacher conferences, understand the resources of the schools, be able to talk with the teachers, etc. The family education model does this
 - Additional funds for new course sections and materials to immediately provide ESL classes to new adult refugees.
 - Work with related agencies in order to make appropriate policies related to understanding: the need for cultural orientation in some depth; how long it takes to learn a new language and coordination of support services
 - Support for the Family Education concept through serious coordination between adult educators and PK-12 staff.
 - Clarification of how to serve the older teen students.
 - Opportunity to meet with faculty to do in-service on providing appropriate services.

2. Long term needs

- The new refugees have expressed a desire to have more than ESL—they would like to have opportunities to go on to college. Transition programming and services will be important for students who are at highest levels of ESL.

3. Best practices

- Family Education
Adult and early childhood faculty and staff working together to ensure that all family members are learning and that parents have the skills to support their children's success in school. Programming should be:
 - *On-site in the PK-3 facility if possible
 - *Well planned with on-going coordination among the staff of both the adult and EC programs.
 - *Inclusive of adult ESL classes, parenting skills classes, parent and child together (PACT) time; early childhood education, and a variety of life skills experiences.
- Appropriate scheduling of ESL with other services.
Provide appropriate cultural orientation and orientation to being a student (e.g. how to study skills) before starting actual ESL classes.
- Try to keep the new refugee students as a student cohort for the first semester so that instruction can be targeted at this group more intensely.
- Provide bi-lingual teachers or support staff in the classes.

4. Other resources

We are working at the federal level to try to get additional funding for states with new Hmong refugees. Private sector funds may be the best bet. Verizon and Wal-Mart are two that have literacy related ventures.

5. Gaps in refugee education

There is a need to emphasize teaching parents the skills that will to help them be the main supporter for their children's education. We need to keep the parents influence dominant in the families. In order to do that they have to learn what it means to support their children's learning e.g. help with homework, go to parent-teacher conferences, understand the resources of the schools, be able to talk with the teachers, etc. The family education model does this.